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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RULGPSU/COMSOC SOUTH
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEAHND/CDRJTFB SOTO CANO HO
RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

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SUBJECT: HONDURAS PRESS COVERAGE OF INSULZA READOUT TO OAS

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 831

¶1. (U) Summary. All four major dailies covered the August 26 presentation to the OAS by Secretary General Insulza. They highlighted the failure of the August 24-25 mission of OAS Foreign Ministers, but noted that Insulza remains hopeful that a negotiated settlement to Honduras' political crisis remains possible. End Summary.

¶2. (U) The Honduran press provided widespread coverage in its August 27 editions of the readout provided to the OAS on August 26 by its Secretary-General, Jose Miguel Insulza, regarding the August 24-25 visit to Honduras by a delegation of OAS foreign ministers to press all parties to accept the San Jose Accord as the solution to the country's political crisis. Three of the country's four national newspapers carried headlines saying that Insulza said the dialogue in Honduras remained open. All four newspapers noted that Insulza told the OAS that a negotiated settlement of Honduras' political crisis remains possible, but that the window of opportunity is closing as the November 29 election date draws near. Three of the four newspapers noted that Roberto Micheletti told the Foreign Ministers that Honduras can move forward without aid from international donors.

¶3. (U) "La Tribuna," which is owned by the family of former President Carlos Flores, a member of the Liberal party, noted that the delegation of Foreign Ministers clearly told Micheletti that it would be a mistake to believe that elections will be a solution to the political crisis. "La Tribuna" reported that Insulza told the press that a number of OAS countries are not willing to recognize a new Honduran government that is elected in the upcoming November 29 election. The paper went on to note that Insulza also said that the elections were already scheduled before the coup and that he hopes they will proceed smoothly and that the newly elected President will assume office in January.

¶4. (U) "El Heraldito", an independent newspaper that supports the de facto government, stated that the OAS now wants to foster dialogue after condemning Honduras without knowing the details of the events of June 28. The "Heraldito" said the OAS Foreign Ministers' delegation failed to obtain support for the San Jose Accord because it provides that President Zelaya will be reinstated and granted amnesty and these provisions contravene Honduras' law and Constitution. "El Heraldito" stated that Zelaya was deposed for violating the law and Constitution and faces corruption charges.

¶5. (U) The headline in "La Prensa," which is also owned by the owner of "El Herald," was: Insulza admits that there is opposition to Zelaya's return. "La Prensa" noted that Insulza said that the de facto government is aware of the possibility of sanctions. "La Prensa" reported that Insulza stated that remarks made by President Zelaya after the arrival of the Foreign Ministers' delegation to Honduras did not contribute to creating an environment facilitating acceptance of the San Jose Accord. According to "La Prensa," Insulza provided as an example Zelaya's threat to jail for life those who carried out the coup although he later clarified that he would only take such action if the San Jose Accord was not accepted. "La Prensa" also reported that Insulza said none of the delegation's interlocutors indicated a willingness to accept Zelaya's return.

¶6. (U) "El Tiempo," an independent newspaper with a liberal orientation owned by Liberal party supporter Jaime Rosenthal, reported that Insulza said there is concern that groups who oppose the coup will take action. "El Tiempo" also reported that Insulza said it is improbable that the OAS will reinstate Honduras, since two-thirds or 22 of member nations, would need to vote in favor.

¶7. (SBU) Comment. While the reporting was generally balanced, headlines emphasized that talks with the OAS would continue, assuring regime supporters that the possibility of reconciliation with the international community remains. End Comment.
HENSHAW